

CHAPTER 5 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) coordinates and works with the public and agencies (such as other land management and resource management agencies), often continuing relationships established during previous planning efforts and through BLM's day-to-day management activities. The BLM recognizes that the TriCounty Planning Area is valued by many people who are greatly interested in the outcome of the current planning process. The BLM's task, therefore, is to make the planning process as open as practicable and to engage the assistance of all interested parties in identifying relevant issues. The BLM's efforts to determine the level of interest and the issues associated with management of public land began informally before the planning process commenced, and they were formalized during the scoping process once planning started. Based on input from the public, the BLM developed a public participation plan to integrate public and agency participation and collaboration into the entire planning process. The BLM's intent is to extend that collaboration beyond planning and into implementation and maintenance of the resource management plan (RMP).

In the spring of 2003, before planning commenced, representatives of the BLM Las Cruces District Office met informally with community members to learn their opinions, ideas, and concerns about management of public land. As a result of this informal dialogue, the BLM developed an initial community profile, which is documented in the *Preliminary Assessment of Community Interests and Communication Strategies by Geographic Area: The Las Cruces Field Office Planning Area*. This preliminary dialogue gave the BLM an understanding and appreciation of community issues related to public land management and how the citizens issues aligned with the BLM's own management concerns, which assisted the BLM in conceptualizing strategies for effective communication with agencies and the public, and also prepared the community for the planning process and enabled its members to respond with more effective comments during scoping.

The BLM committed to certain guidelines to ensure that the planning process would remain as open and inclusive as possible. These included the following actions:

- Accept public comments for consideration throughout all stages of the planning effort.
- Grant all requests for information (unless the information is unavailable or prohibited by policy or law).
- Assign staff and managers to meet with all groups and individuals that request meetings to discuss the planning process.
- Open internal processes for review by the cooperating agencies and actively invite their comments and assistance.
- Assign managers and staff to prepare planning information for all meetings with agencies, tribes, and organizations (including the BLM's New Mexico Resource Advisory Council).

The BLM used the following means to inform all interested parties about the progress of the planning effort:

- Public scoping
- Partnerships with cooperating agencies
- Planning Bulletins
- Internet Information

- Community-based partnership and stewardship workshops
- Consultation and coordination with American Indian tribes
- Formal consultation with relevant regulatory agencies
- Informal presentations to interested groups

The focus of this chapter is on the coordination and consultation, in the spirit of community-based collaborative planning, that has taken place from scoping, which began early in the planning process in the beginning of 2005, through the development and assessment of alternative planning strategies presented in this draft of the *TriCounty Resource Management Plans and Environmental Impact Statement (TriCounty RMP/EIS)*. This *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS* document represents the efforts and involvement of the broad range of participants.

5.1 PLANNING BULLETINS AND WEB SITE

As part of the public participation program, the BLM committed to disseminate information about the planning process and its status through a series of informational bulletins and by posting materials on the BLM's Web site.

The planning bulletins, in a newsletter format, were planned to be distributed to interested parties at key milestones during the planning process to inform them about planning issues and progress and to invite comment. The mailing list for the planning bulletins includes affected Federal, State, and local government agencies, Tribal governments, and interested groups and individuals. To date, three planning bulletins have been distributed (listed in Table 5-1).

TABLE 5-1 PLANNING BULLETINS DISTRIBUTED	
February 2005	Project description, announcement of scoping meetings, comment form questionnaire
July 2005	Summary of predominant issues identified during scoping
November 2006	Description of the preliminary alternatives
April 2010	Current status of RMP, court decision on Fluid Minerals RMP Amendment, request for comments on fluid minerals management, and renewable energy, and livestock grazing

Early in the process, the BLM established a Web site to provide the public with access to current information about the planning process. Information posted on the BLM Web site includes a description of the purpose and need for the *TriCounty RMP/EIS*, a description of the planning process, a schedule, the meeting locations and dates, the scoping report, the planning bulletins, the draft alternative management strategies and associated maps, and a copy of the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS*.

5.2 PUBLIC SCOPING

The planning and EIS process, as well as scoping, commenced on January 28, 2005, with the publication in the *Federal Register* (Volume 70, No. 18, page 4,146) of the BLM's intent to revise the 1986 *White Sands RMP*, amend the 1993 *Mimbres RMP*, and to conduct public scoping meetings. In March 2005, the BLM Las Cruces District Office hosted four open-house scoping meetings in southern New Mexico to provide information and a forum for public input into the plan and the process. The New Mexico communities of Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Truth or Consequences, and Anthony were selected as appropriate meeting sites because of their locations within the Planning Area.

Aside from the Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register*, the commencement of the planning and EIS process and the scoping process was announced in paid advertisements in regional newspapers, media releases, the BLM New Mexico Web site, the Las Cruces District Office Web site, and a planning bulletin mailed to all entities, organizations, and people on the mailing list.

The planning bulletin contained a comment form that prompted responses about activities on or uses of the Planning Area and requested comments to help BLM gain perspective on attitudes about public land. The questions on the comment form were as follows:

- What do you value about public land in Sierra, Otero, and/or Doña Ana counties and why?
- Do you participate in outdoor recreation activities on public land in Sierra, Otero, and/or Doña Ana counties? If so, what types of recreational activities do you participate in or value? If yes, where do you participate in outdoor recreation activities? If no, please let us know why not.
- What activities on or uses of the public land in Sierra, Otero, and/or Doña Ana counties, other than outdoor recreation, are important to you and why?
- We want to know the types of information BLM should provide to educate the public about BLM and its programs. How familiar are you with BLM management policies and programs?
- How would you like to see the natural (e.g., water, soil, wildlife, vegetation) and cultural (prehistoric, historic, traditional cultural places), recreational, scientific resources on public land managed in Sierra, Otero, and/or Doña Ana counties?
- How would you like to see the uses (e.g., grazing, recreation, etc.) of public land and its resources managed in Sierra, Otero, and/or Doña Ana counties?
- Do you have any other comments about management of public land in Sierra, Otero, and/or Doña Ana counties you would like to tell us?

The meetings were attended by approximately 187 people, as summarized in Table 5-2.

TABLE 5-2 PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING DATES, LOCATIONS, AND ATTENDANCE		
March 15, 2005	Las Cruces	133
March 16, 2005	Alamogordo	18
March 22, 2005	Truth or Consequences	26
March 23, 2005	Anthony	10
TOTAL		187

Each open-house meeting began with a brief presentation by the BLM team leader to provide an overview of the planning and EIS process. Following the presentation, community members were encouraged to review maps and informational display boards arranged in stations around the meeting room and to ask questions about or discuss with the BLM staff their interests in the *TriCounty RMP/EIS*. Members of the planning team were available at the stations to discuss interests related to the Planning Area and to record oral comments from the public. Comment forms, copies of the first planning bulletin, and maps of the Planning Area were available as handouts at each open house. A Spanish-speaking BLM staff member was available to translate at the open houses, if needed. BLM also invited community members to submit comments in written formats other than the comment form, including letters and electronic mail (email) messages.

The period established for scoping was 60 days, rather than the required minimum of 30 days, to ensure that adequate time was allowed for comments to be submitted. Although the BLM Las Cruces District Office welcomes comments at any time during the planning process, comments received during the scoping period were particularly helpful in guiding the scope and direction of the planning studies and analyses. The scoping period ended on March 28, 2005. All the comments received were compiled, reviewed, organized, and analyzed. Issues were derived from the comments and documented in the *TriCounty RMP/EIS Scoping Report* (2005), which is available for review on the BLM's Web site and at the Las Cruces District Office, and summarized in Chapter 1 of the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS*.

5.3 COOPERATING AGENCIES

The BLM is required by law to prepare analysis and documentation "*in cooperation with State and local governments*" and other agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise as set forth in Title 42 United States Code (USC.) 4331(a), 4332(2). Qualified agencies, tribes, or other governments that enter into formal agreements under this provision are called cooperating agencies. In compliance with this mandate and in the spirit of collaboration, BLM invited a broad range of Federal, State, and local agencies and Tribal governments to become cooperating agencies in the development of the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS*. The agencies and local governments formally cooperating in the preparation of the *TriCounty RMP/EIS* are the City of Las Cruces; Sierra, Otero, and Doña Ana counties; New Mexico Department of Agriculture; New Mexico Department of Game and Fish; US Army Fort Bliss; and US Army White Sands Missile Range. A Memorandum of Understanding was developed and signed by these participants to formalize their participation. The responsibilities of cooperating agencies are outline in 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1501.6 and summarized in the *TriCounty RMP/EIS Scoping Report* (2005).

Although not cooperating agencies, representatives from other interested Federal and State agencies and Tribal governments have provided BLM with verbal or written comments and have provided resource data or other information beneficial to the planning process.

5.4 TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

BLM is in the process of developing an agency tribal consultation policy that tiers to the recently released Department of the Interior tribal consultation policy. The BLM will comply with that policy for projects in the Planning Area. At present, consultation conducted pursuant to *BLM Manual Section 8120: Tribal Consultation under Cultural Resources and General Procedural Guidance for Native American Consultation*, the BLM coordinated with tribes that have potential interests in the Planning Area. The following 10 Federally-recognized tribes were contacted to provide information about the *TriCounty RMP/EIS* planning process and asked to provide relevant information, particularly about traditional cultural resources, and identify any concerns that should be addressed during preparation of the *TriCounty RMP*.

- Mescalero Apache Tribe
- Fort Sill Apache Tribe
- White Mountain Apache Tribe
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
- Isleta Pueblo

- Hopi Tribe
- Navajo Nation
- Kiowa Tribe
- Comanche Indian Tribe
- Tesuque Pueblo

The BLM also coordinated with the Piro-Manso-Tiwa Indian Tribe, which currently is not Federally-recognized. The Piro-Manso-Tiwa Indian Tribe indicated that they had historical ties to the Planning Area, and the BLM has continued to provide them with information about the planning efforts. The White Mountain Apache Tribe was the only other tribe that responded, and they indicated they had no interest in receiving further information about the *TriCounty RMP/EIS* unless sites with Apache cultural affiliation were discovered in the Planning Area.

During reviews of specific projects, the BLM routinely addresses most tribal concerns, which often focus on disturbance of archaeological sites within their traditional territories and especially disturbance of any associated human burials.

5.5 OTHER FORMAL CONSULTATION

The BLM is required to prepare an EIS in coordination with any studies or analyses required by the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 USC Section 661 et seq.), Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 USC Section 1531 et seq.), and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC Section 470 et seq.).

5.5.1 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, formal consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service is required when the action agency determines that the preferred alternative of a draft RMP may affect a species listed as threatened or endangered or a designated critical habitat. The consultation process determines whether the preferred alternative is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or to destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. The process begins with BLM's written request and submittal of a completed Biological Assessment and, if applicable, concludes with the issuance of a Biological Opinion from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The BLM Las Cruces District Office has prepared a Biological Assessment for the *TriCounty RMP/EIS* and has provided that to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for consideration and will continue to consult with them as they develop their Biological Opinion.

5.5.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the BLM is required to consider the effects of its undertakings on properties listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (which can include a diversity of archaeological, historical, and traditional cultural sites, buildings, structures, and districts). The BLM Las Cruces District Office addresses National Historic Preservation Act reviews through a Section 106 Nationwide Programmatic Agreement executed in 1997 and the State of New Mexico implementation protocol. The nationwide agreement replaced a similar agreement that BLM had executed in 1982 for its cultural resource program in New Mexico. In accordance with that protocol, the BLM offered the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office an opportunity to provide input and to be a reviewer of the *TriCounty RMP/EIS*. The BLM also requested comments about defining the cultural resource component of the planning strategy, including definition of the area of potential

effects, basing the analyses on existing data and identification of other interested parties. The BLM also used the public involvement program for the EIS as an opportunity to solicit public review and comment about issues related to managing cultural resources. The New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office declined to participate as a preparer or reviewer for the *TriCounty RMP/EIS*, but the BLM has continued to provide that agency with updates about the planning process.

5.6 COMMUNITY-BASED COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

In addition to several informal meetings and briefings by the BLM, two formal meetings were conducted—a workshop with planning partners and cooperating agencies to discuss the social and economic conditions of the Planning Area (by county) and an open-house meeting to present the BLM’s preliminary management strategies.

Economic Profile System workshops were held in early 2005 to help the BLM and potential cooperating agencies gain insight into the economic makeup of the Planning Area. The Sonoran Institute assisted the BLM with the workshops, which were held in Alamogordo and Truth or Consequences with invitees attending from all three counties in the Planning Area. The workshops were especially helpful for community members and BLM planning partners to understand the changing economy and its relationship to the environment, including public land. The Economic Profile System, provided free of charge, allows users to automatically and efficiently produce a detailed socioeconomic profile at the state, regional, and county or multicounty level, using a spreadsheet program. The profiles contain tables and figures that illustrate long-term trends in population, employment and personal income by industry, average earnings, agriculture, business development, and retirement and other non-labor income. Much of this same information has been used in developing the economic analysis for the *TriCounty RMP*.

Following the development of preliminary alternative management strategies, the BLM presented and sought input on these preliminary alternatives during three open-house meetings in December 2006. The BLM presented the preliminary alternatives by individual environmental issues and solicited comments. Table 5-3 shows the date and location for each open-house meeting.

TABLE 5-3 COMMUNITY OPEN-HOUSE MEETINGS		
Date	Location	Number Attending
December 12, 2006	Las Cruces	160
December 13, 2006	Alamogordo	121
December 14, 2006	Truth or Consequences	48
TOTAL		329

To obtain public input during the open-house meetings, participants were asked to consider the following three questions pertaining to the alternatives:

- Are your issues and concerns addressed in at least one alternative?
- Can your uses of public land be accommodated in at least one alternative?
- Are the resources important to you adequately protected through restrictions on other uses in at least one alternative?

Information collected during the open-house meetings was considered in further defining alternatives presented in the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS*.

5.7 MEETINGS WITH GRAZING ALLOTTEES

In addition to the open-house meetings to discuss alternatives, the BLM also offered to meet with grazing allottees primarily to inform them about ACEC proposals on their grazing allotments and discuss other aspects of the TriCounty RMP/EIS. On December 8, 2006, the Las Cruces District Office mailed letters to ranchers that had proposed ACECs identified on their allotments inviting them to meet with BLM representatives to discuss the proposed ACECs and the RMP process.

On January 5, 2007, a second letter was mailed to the same list of ranchers (above) to invite them to one of three discussion meeting scheduled for January 12, 16, and 17, 2007 at Bobby Jones' home (Otero Mesa), the BLM office in Las Cruces, and the Sierra Soil and Water Conservation District office in Truth or Consequences, respectively. The forum for those meetings was to provide a brief explanation of the planning process and schedule, and to explain the ACEC nomination process and discuss what impacts, if any, ACEC designations could have on their allotments or operations. A total of 27 individuals met with BLM representatives at these meetings.

An additional meeting in Otero County was requested by the grazing allottees and on January 26, 2007, two BLM representatives met with 12 individuals at the home of Salty and Debbie Hughes in eastern Otero County.

At all meetings, the BLM discussed the TriCounty planning process; described the ACEC nomination, evaluation and designation process; and talked about the draft alternatives for management of areas with wilderness characteristics. Several individuals requested more detailed map showing the allotment boundaries with respect to the proposed ACECs. These were later provided.

5.8 NEWSLETTER #4 AND RESPONSES

Due to the changes in the TriCounty RMP/EIS regarding fluid minerals, renewable energy development, and livestock grazing management, the BLM Las Cruces District Office sent out approximately 1,000 newsletters in April 2010 to update those on the mailing list of changes that were being made to the preliminary draft RMP/EIS. In that newsletter, the BLM asked for comments on those proposed changes. Only comments regarding fluid minerals management, renewable energy development and livestock grazing management were considered during this comment period. A self-addressed, postage paid comment form was included in the newsletter and comments were also accepted by email at nmlcdscomments@blm.gov. The comment period lasted from May 2 until June 1, 2010.

The District Office received approximately 2,500 email messages that were essentially "*form letters*" with same or similar wording and ideas expressed. A sample is shown in the Figure 5-1.

Ten emails and, in most cases, follow-up hard copies were received expressing more substantive comments, concerns, and ideas regarding the three management issues. These came from organizations and individuals.

BLM_NM_LCDO_Comments

Figure 5-1

From: National Wildlife Federation <NationalWildlifeFederation@nwf.org> on behalf of
Sent: Sunday, October 24, 2010 1:25 AM
To: BLM_NM_LCDO_Comments
Subject: No energy development in wilderness areas

Oct 24, 2010

Dwayne Sykes
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sykes,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on oil and gas and renewable energy development for the TriCounty Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

BLM should close Otero Mesa, other wilderness-quality lands, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC's) to oil and gas development in the RMPs. In its preliminary range of alternatives, BLM found Nutt Mountain, Bar Canyon, part of Otero Mesa, and Sacramento Escarpment ACEC to have wilderness characteristics; these areas should be protected from energy development in the TriCounty RMPs. BLM should defer all new oil and gas leasing actions in the planning area until the programmatic RMP amendment is completed and a broader landscape-level analysis has been completed.

The RMPs also present an opportunity for BLM to consider renewable energy development in the tri-county area. Development of renewable energy should occur on already disturbed lands and more populated areas that are closer to existing transmission lines.

The wilderness areas in southern New Mexico are home to New Mexico's last native population of pronghorn and more than 200 species of songbird, as well as the extremely rare Aplomado Falcon. The integrity of these lands should be preserved for wildlife, and their migration corridors kept intact. The BLM should protect the landscape and ensure that we can continue to enjoy recreational activities in those areas.

Sincerely,

5.9 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

TABLE 5-4
SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EVENTS DURING PREPARATION OF THE
TRICOUNTY RMP

DATE	EVENT
Spring 2003	Informal meetings with community members to learn their opinions, ideas, and concerns about management of public land.
12-15-04	Meeting with representatives of The Wilderness Society (TWS) and New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NMWA): Discussed NMWA wilderness characteristics inventory and addressing lands with wilderness characteristics, and trails and travel management (OHV) in the RMP.
1-28-05	Public outreach: Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare RMP/EIS published in the Federal Register.
02-05	Public outreach: Planning Bulletin #1 issued describing the project, announcing public scoping meetings, and requesting comments.
03-02-05	Semi-annual coordination meeting: Update on RMP status.
3-15-05	Public scoping meeting in Las Cruces, NM
3-16-05	Public scoping meeting in Alamogordo, NM
3-22-05	Public scoping meeting in Truth or Consequences, NM
3-23-05	Public scoping meeting in Anthony, NM
4-19-05	Sonoran Institute Economic Profile Workshop held in Truth or Consequences, NM.
4-20-05	Sonoran Institute Economic Profile Workshop held in Alamogordo, NM.
07-05	Public outreach: Planning Bulletin #2 issued summarizing the major issues identified during public scoping.
08-11-05	Meeting with Cooperating Agencies: Overview of the BLM RMP process, role of cooperators, and review of public scoping.
02-16-06	Meeting with TWS representatives: Discussion on addressing lands with wilderness characteristics, trails and travel management, and land disposal in the RMP.
06-13-06	Meeting with Cooperating Agencies: Overview of the BLM RMP process and introduction to developing alternatives.
07-25-06	Semi-annual military coordination meeting: Update on RMP status.
11-06	Public outreach: Planning Bulletin #3 issued describing the preliminary alternatives.
11-07-06	Meeting with Cooperating Agencies: Discussed RMP goals and objectives, draft alternatives, and proposed public workshops on the alternatives.
12-08-06	Public Outreach: Letter mailed to grazing permittees inviting them to meet with BLM to discuss management of proposed and existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) within their allotments.
12-12-06	Community Open House in Las Cruces, NM to discuss and receive comments on the preliminary alternatives.
12-13-06	Community Open House in Alamogordo, NM to discuss and receive comments on the preliminary alternatives.
12-14-06	Community Open House in Truth or Consequences, NM to discuss and receive comments on the preliminary alternatives.
01-12-07	Meeting with grazing permittees in Otero County to discuss the RMP process and schedule, and potential impacts of ACEC designations on their allotments or operations.
01-16-07	Meeting with grazing permittees in Las Cruces, NM to discuss the RMP process and schedule, and potential impacts of ACEC management on their allotments or operations
01-17-07	Meeting with grazing permittees in Truth or Consequences to discuss the RMP process and schedule, and potential impacts of ACEC management on their allotments or operations
01-26-07	Meeting with grazing permittees in southeastern Otero County to discuss the RMP process and schedule,

TABLE 5-4
SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EVENTS DURING PREPARATION OF THE
TRICOUNTY RMP

DATE	EVENT
	and potential impacts of ACEC management on their allotments or operations
03-05-07	Meeting with TWS representatives: Update on RMP status and further discussion of managing lands with wilderness characteristics and vehicle use designations
05-21-07	Meeting with Cooperating Agencies' representatives: Update on RMP process, identified and discussed major issues, and reviewed schedule.
05-21-07	Meeting with City of Las Cruces: Discussed Metropolitan Planning Organization proposed travel routes in relation to proposed disposal and special designations in the vicinity of Las Cruces
06-09-08	Meeting with TWS representatives: TWS presented their Otero Mesa Grassland ACEC proposal. Discussed current status of HEYCO application for permit to drill (APD), status and schedule for RMP, and renewable energy projects and transmission lines
12-09-09	Meeting with TWS and NMWA representatives: Discussed status of RMP, proposed oil and gas decisions, HEYCO APD update, renewable energy applications, and Doña Ana County National Conservation Areas/Wilderness proposed legislation
04-10	Public outreach: Planning Bulletin #4 issued describing changes in RMP regarding fluid minerals management, renewable energy initiatives, and livestock grazing; and requesting comments on these changes
4-07-10	Workshop presented by Sonoran Institute and sponsored DAC County Commission: Coordinating Community and BLM Regional Planning
12-09-10	Meeting with TWS representatives: Update on the TriCounty RMP
10-20-11	Meeting of LCDO Resource Advisory Council: Summary and current status Of the TriCounty RMP
NOTE: This table is a chronological listing of both formal and informal public, group or agency meetings and public outreach. Formal meetings are those that are required by BLM Land Use Planning or NEPA regulations and are advertised in advance. Informal meetings are those that are requested by BLM, an interest group, government agency or other interested party and are not publicly advertised.	

5.10 RELATED PLANS

Plans completed by Federal and State agencies, local jurisdictions, and organizations were reviewed to determine whether policies and decisions are consistent or interdependent with resource management in the TriCounty Planning Area. The 2006 *TriCounty Analysis of the Management Situation* highlighted the Federal (other than the BLM), State, and local agency and organization policies, regulations, and planning efforts that may impact BLM decision making for each resource or provide opportunities for coordination toward shared or interdependent goals. Because the Planning Area extends over a significant portion of New Mexico, numerous planning documents were reviewed for the project. Several of these plans are briefly described below. Further descriptions of these decision documents are summarized in Chapter 5 of the *TriCounty Analysis of the Management Situation* (BLM 2006).

The discussion of each resource includes a description of plans completed by other Federal and State agencies, including the US Environmental Protection Agency, Forest Service, USFWS, NPS, New Mexico Environment Department, New Mexico State Land Office, NMDGF, and New Mexico State Parks.

5.10.1 FEDERAL

In 2004, the NPS and the BLM prepared a comprehensive management plan and Final EIS for *El Camino Real Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail*. A 29-mile-long segment of the trail is located on public land in Sierra and Doña Ana counties. The comprehensive management plan and Final EIS envision a multi-use recreational retracement trail and venue for public interpretation.

In response to a request from Congress for an assessment of the need for a unified Federal policy on the collection, storage, and preservation of fossils and for standards that would maximize the availability of fossils for scientific study, the USDI prepared the *Assessment of Fossil Management on Federal and American Indian Lands* (USDI 2000). The assessment provides several recommendations for administrative and Congressional actions pertaining to fossil collections and management on Federal land.

Numerous distinct recreational areas exist in the TriCounty Planning Area. Accordingly, several Federal management plans establish guidance for managing recreational opportunities in the Planning Area. Some of these recreational plans reviewed for the *TriCounty RMP/EIS* are listed below.

Forest land that offers recreational opportunities in the Planning Area is managed by the 1986 *Gila National Forest Plan*, 1985 *Cibola National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan*, and 1998 *Lincoln National Forest Plan*. Generally, these three plans support the establishment of new recreational opportunities in a manner that protects existing resources.

Three Federally-owned properties in the Planning Area provide limited recreational opportunities to the public—McGregor Range, Doña Ana Range, and the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge. The 2000 *Fort Bliss Mission and Master Plan Final EIS* provides recreation management allowing limited public access for recreation, hunting, and cattle grazing to the extent those activities do not conflict with military uses. The San Andres National Wildlife Refuge, established to promote conservation and development of natural wildlife resources, is surrounded by the White Sands Missile Range and is not open to the public.

The *National Management Strategy for Mountain Biking*, established in 1993, provides BLM field offices with guidance for developing a proactive management approach. BLM field offices are directed to coordinate at the National level and with states, local organizations, and volunteers.

The *National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Land*, issued in 2001, provides the BLM district and field offices with guidance on providing OHV opportunities while balancing vehicle use with protection of sensitive natural resource values on public land.

5.10.2 STATE

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), Air Quality Bureau identifies State air quality regulations, State ambient air quality standards, compliance requirements of State and Federal regulations, and enforcement methods, such as permits required for air pollution sources. Some aspects of the State Implementation Plan require compliance with regulations designed to bring non-attainment areas, which can be found in parts of Doña Ana County, back into attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The Las Cruces District Office prescribed burn and wildfire management programs follow the New Mexico Smoke Management Guidance Document (NMED 2005).

The State of New Mexico administers water-planning mechanisms through a series of separate regional water plans initiated by the Office of the State Engineer in conjunction with the Interstate Stream Commission. Sixteen water-planning districts were recognized as a result of legislation enacted in 1987

authorizing the Commission to fund regional water-planning efforts. The following four New Mexico water plans provide guidance for management of water resources:

- The Interstate Stream Commission adopted the *New Mexico State Water Plan* in December 2003 to identify priorities, goals, and objectives for water management in the state that have an impact on the public welfare. Policy statements, implementation strategies, and a brief background discussion and summary of public input are included.
- The New Mexico 2004 *Lower Rio Grande Regional Water Plan* is applicable to the TriCounty Planning Area because the Lower Rio Grande planning region encompasses Doña Ana County and a portion of Sierra County. One conclusion of the plan is that several municipalities in the Mesilla and Jornada del Muerto water basins could exceed their water rights by the year 2012. The plan recommends several water management actions, including public education and water conservation
- The 2003 *Socorro-Sierra Regional Water Plan* guides management of water resources in Socorro and Sierra counties, with the principal river basin of concern being the Rio Grande. Conservation plans and programs, reduced urban and agricultural water demand, and water use efficiency are offered as solutions to the current state of water scarcity in the Sierra County portion of the Planning Area.
- The Otero County portion of the Planning Area is managed by the 2002 *Tularosa, Great Salt, and Sacramento River Basin Regional Water Plan*. This part of the Planning Area is characterized as having even greater water-supply problems than other regions in the state. Solutions to water resource concerns follow those outlined in the previous regional water plans.

In 2001, the State of New Mexico adopted the *New Mexico Historic Preservation Plan*, which provides an overview of the New Mexico's cultural resources; identifies Federal, State, and local agencies included in the New Mexico preservation network; and lists preservation accomplishments from 1996 to 2001. The 2001 Plan recognizes that BLM, as a Federal land management agency, is an important partner in the State's historic preservation network to carry forth goals, objectives, challenges, and opportunities for preservation. The State of New Mexico also is developing a draft Rio Grande Trail Plan. This plan identifies trail development opportunities both in and between state parks along the southern portion of the river (New Mexico State Parks 2006).

The 2004 *New Mexico Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2004-2009* (SCORP) provides State-level recreational use and area information and is the primary means by which the State and USDI, via the NPS, cooperate to provide for outdoor recreation needs. Regional planning districts support the outdoor recreation planning and economic strategies of concentrated areas throughout the state as administered by the SCORP. For instance, the economy of BLM Region VII, which includes Sierra and Doña Ana counties, largely revolves around recreation and tourism. BLM is encouraged to implement management decisions and opportunities found in the SCORP in its planning decisions (New Mexico State Park Division 2004).

The 2006 *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy* for New Mexico focuses on species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) and key wildlife habitats, as well as on overcoming the challenges affecting the conservation of both. The overriding desired outcome is that New Mexico's key habitats persist in the condition, connectivity, and quantity necessary to sustain viable and resilient populations of resident SGCN and host a variety of land uses with reduced resource use conflicts.

Future transportation projects in the Planning Area are found in the New Mexico Department of Transportation's *Fiscal Year 2008–Fiscal Year 2011 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program*, published in 2009. The plan identifies various Federal, State, and local transportation corridor plans in the Planning Area, providing BLM with a list of potential roadway projects that could affect BLM-managed public land.

5.10.3 COUNTY

The 2011 *Otero County Comprehensive Plan* describes the community's vision for the physical development of the county over the next 20 years. The plan is intended as a general policy guide concerning the location, character, and type of growth in the community. The plan addresses in detail the county's policies regarding public land. Based on its custom and culture, the county supports the continuous multiple-use of Federal land and resources and seeks to play a major role in the decisions regarding public land use. The document summarizes the major legislation in this area and opportunities for county input and control.

One Valley, One Vision 2040, (2011) is a long-range regional plan for Doña Ana County. It is advisory in nature and looks at growth from various perspectives beyond any one political district or authority. The plan is intended as the vision of the community's future. Through the long range/broad scope approach, the dynamics of the community, particularly land use and growth perspectives, can begin to take shape and be realized. It seeks to address topics that are shared among jurisdictions and communities, grouping identifiable themes for which strategies are then prepared. The time horizon in which the plan seeks to identify and address the issues spans a 30 year period, thus reflecting the communities' desire for long-range planning.

A Vision: Open Space and Trails System for Doña Ana County, New Mexico, a plan developed in 2005 by citizens to propose a network of open space throughout Doña Ana County is neither an official nor an adopted plan but is endorsed by the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. Several areas listed in the plan—including the Organ/Franklin Mountains, Doña Ana Mountains, and Tortugas Mountains—are on BLM-managed public land in Doña Ana County, and the plan proposes that these areas remain under BLM management.

5.10.3 LOCAL

The City of Las Cruces' 2004 *Rio Grande Riparian Ecological Corridor Project* report identifies the Butterfield Overland Trail, El Camino Real, and Los Tules sites as cultural assets along the Rio Grande Corridor that provide public interpretation opportunities as part of the project. These heritage resource sites are located either entirely or partially on public land.

Several local jurisdictions in the Planning Area have established individual development plans with management goals, policies, or objectives related to resources and resource uses. Local jurisdiction planning documents reviewed include the following:

- 1999 *City of Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan*
- 2003 *City of Las Cruces Zoning Code*
- 2005 *City of Las Cruces Strategic Plan 2005-2009*
- 2000 *City of Las Cruces Extraterritorial Zoning Comprehensive Plan 2000-2020*

- 2005 *Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Plan*
- 2004 *Town of Mesilla Comprehensive Plan*
- 1999 *El Paso Comprehensive Plan*
- 1999 *City of Truth or Consequences Comprehensive Plan*

5.11 DRAFT RMP/EIS DISTRIBUTION LIST

The following agencies, organizations, and individuals were notified that the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS* will be available in paper copy, on compact disc (CD), and on the BLM's Web site. Some have requested and will receive a paper copy or CD of the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS* for review and comment. The BLM will send copies of the *Proposed TriCounty RMP/Final EIS* to the same entities listed below and to those who request a copy.

Federal Agencies

- Department of Agriculture
 - Forest Service
 - Gila National Forest
 - Lincoln National Forest
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service, Las Cruces, New Mexico
- Department of Defense
 - Air Force Regional Environmental Office, San Francisco, California
 - White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico
 - Fort Bliss, Texas
 - Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico
- Department of Energy
- Office of Environmental Compliance (EH-23), Washington, D.C.
- Department of the Interior
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Albuquerque, New Mexico
 - Reston, Virginia
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Washington Office, D.C.
 - Albuquerque District Office, New Mexico
 - Pecos District Office, New Mexico
 - Farmington District Office, New Mexico
 - New Mexico State Office
 - Bureau of Reclamation, Albuquerque, New Mexico
 - Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Albuquerque, New Mexico
 - Division of Environmental Quality, Arlington, Virginia
 - Geological Survey, Albuquerque, New Mexico
 - Minerals Management Service
 - Denver, Colorado
 - Herndon, Virginia
 - National Park Service
 - Washington Service Center, Washington, D.C.
 - Pacific West Region, San Francisco, California
 - White Sands National Monument
 - Guadalupe Mountains National Park
 - Carlsbad Caverns National Park

- Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Oakland, California
- Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Washington, D.C.
- Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Environmental Protection Agency
 - Washington, D.C.
 - Denver, Colorado
 - San Francisco, California

State Agencies and Organizations

- Governor, State of New Mexico
- New Mexico Corporation Commission
- New Mexico Department of Agriculture
- New Mexico Department of Commerce
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- New Mexico Department of Transportation
- New Mexico Environment Department
- New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department
- New Mexico Office of the State Engineer
- New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office
- New Mexico State Land Office
- New Mexico State Parks
- New Mexico State University

Local Governments

- El Paso County, Texas
- Otero County, New Mexico
- Sierra County, New Mexico
- Doña Ana County, New Mexico
- City of Albuquerque, New Mexico
- City of Las Cruces, New Mexico
- City of Alamogordo, New Mexico
- City of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico

Tribal Governments

- Mescalero Apache Tribe
- Fort Sill Apache Indian Tribe
- White Mountain Apache Indian Tribe
- San Carlos Apache Indian Tribe
- Zuni Indian Tribe
- Acoma Indian Tribe
- Isleta Indian Tribe
- Ysleta del Sur Indian Tribe
- Tesuque Pueblo

Members of Congress

- Senator Tom Udall, State of New Mexico
- Senator Martin Heinrich, State of New Mexico
- Representative Michelle Lujan Gisham, 1st Congressional District of New Mexico
- Representative Steve Pearce, 2nd Congressional District of New Mexico
- Representative Ben Lujan, 3rd Congressional District of New Mexico

New Mexico Libraries

- Alamogordo Public Library, Alamogordo
- Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, Las Cruces
- Truth or Consequences Public Library, Truth or Consequences
- Valley Public Library, Anthony

5.12 COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT RMP/EIS

Concurrent with the distribution of the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS*, a notice was published in the *Federal Register* announcing the availability of the draft document for public review and comment, which marked the beginning of the 90-day review and comment period. About midway through the review period for the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS*, the BLM will hold public meetings for the purpose of informing the public and soliciting and public comments on the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS*. The *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS* was sent to the cooperating agencies listed in Section 5.3 and entities listed in Section 5.11 and additional agencies with a potential interest, as requested in responses to the April 2008 planning bulletin or through other means. The *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS* also is available from <http://www.nm.blm.gov>.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the BLM Las Cruces District Office, 1800 Marquess Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005, during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the *Proposed TriCounty RMP/Final EIS*. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If a respondent wishes to withhold a name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, he or she must state this prominently at the beginning of the written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

All written and oral comments received during the 90-day review and comment period will be compiled, analyzed, and summarized. A *Proposed TriCounty RMP/Final EIS* will be prepared that addresses and provides responses to the comments received on the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS*.

5.13 LIST OF PREPARERS

Table 5-5 lists the *Draft TriCounty RMP/EIS* preparers and members of the interdisciplinary team.

**TABLE 5-5
LIST OF PREPARERS AND REVIEWERS**

NAME	TITLE	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT RESPONSIBILITY
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT – LAS CRUCES DISTRICT OFFICE		
Jennifer Montoya	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Team Leadership
Clarence “Dwayne” Sykes	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Team Leadership
Tom Phillips	Standards and Guidelines Team Lead	Team Leadership/Contract Administration
Tim Sanders	Assistant District Manager for Multi-Resources	Management Oversight
Ray Hewitt	Geographer	Geographic Information System
Bruce Call	Soil Scientist	Soil, Water, Air
Cory Durr	Hydrologist	Surface And Groundwater
Mohammad H Nash	Soil Scientist	Soils
Philip Smith	Rangeland Management Specialist	Vegetation/Rangeland Management/Forest And Woodland Products
Rich LaCasse	Rangeland Management Specialist	Noxious, Invasive Weeds
Margie Guzman	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife And Special Status Species
Mark Hakkila	Biologist	Wildlife And Special Status Species
Ray Lister	Biologist	Wildlife And Special Status Species
Leticia Lister	Rangeland Management Specialist	Rangeland Management/Forest And Woodland Products
Rena Gutierrez	Writer and Editor	Editor, Document Production
Pam Smith	Archeologist (2005-2006)	Cultural Resources
Mike Smith	Geologist	Minerals
John Besse	Environmental Protection Specialist	Minerals
Joe Sanchez	Natural Resource Specialist	Trails And Travel Management, Recreation
Jacqueline Neckels	Outdoor Recreation Specialist	Wilderness, Recreation
Kathryn Lloyd	Outdoor Recreation Specialist	Wilderness, Visual Resources
Michael Bailey	Outdoor Recreation Specialist	Wilderness, Recreation
Ricky Cox	Fire Management Specialist	Fire And Fuels Management
Ryan Whiteaker	Fire Management Specialist	Fire Management
Steve Bumgarner	Fire Management Officer	Fire And Fuels Management
Frances Martinez	Realty Specialist	Lands
Lorraine Salas	Realty Specialist	Lands
Adam Merrill	Geologist	Geology
Tom Holcomb	Archeologist	Archeology
Angel Mayes	Realty Specialist	Lands
REVIEWERS - NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE		
Jeanette Pranzo	Socioeconomist	Social and Economic Conditions
Joshua Sidon	Economist, National Operations Ctr.	Social and Economic Conditions
Melanie Barnes	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Planning And Environmental Coordination
Mark Spencer	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Planning And Environmental Coordination
David Goodman	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Planning And Environmental Coordination
Marikay Ramsey	Threatened and Endangered Species Biologist	Special Status Species Wildlife
Megan Stouffer	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	
Debby Lucero	Realty Specialist	Lands And Realty, Land Disposal, Rights-Of-Way
Adrian Garcia	Realty Specialist	Lands And Realty
Sarah Schlanger	Archeologist, National Trails Specialist	Cultural Resource And Historic Trails
James Sippel	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness
Shannon Shaw	Petroleum Engineer	Fluid Minerals

**TABLE 5-5
LIST OF PREPARERS AND REVIEWERS**

NAME	TITLE	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT RESPONSIBILITY
Bill Dalness	Geologist	Locatable Minerals
Dave Borland	Forester	Woodlands And Vegetation
Roger Cumpian	Range Management Specialist	Livestock Grazing And Vegetation
Mike Howard	Botanist	Special Status Plant Species
Steve Jordan	Civil Engineer	Roads
John Sherman	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Habitat
Greg Gustina	Fisheries Biologist	Fisheries And Aquatic Habitat
Signa Larralde	Archeologist	Cultural Resources
Jeanne Hoadley	Environmental Protection Specialist	Air
Link Lacewell	Environmental Protection Specialist	Soil, Water, And Hazmat
Becky Hunt	Natural Resource Specialist	Oil & Gas, Geothermal
Lisa Bye	Fuels Specialist	Fire And Fuels
Powell King	Mining Engineer	Mineral Materials
URS CORPORATION		
Cindy Smith	Principal	Project Management, Public Involvement (2008)
Jennifer Frownfelter	Environmental Planner	Project Management
Leslie Watson	Environmental Planner	Project Management
Jennifer Wennerlund	Geographer	Geographic Information Systems
Peter Martinez	Geographer	Database Administration
Deborah Glogoff	Geographer	Geographic Information Systems
Bob Estes,	Chemical Engineering	Air Quality
Peg Goodrich	Chemical Engineering	Air Quality
Mark Murphy, PhD	Environmental Scientist	Natural Resources
Allison Getty	Water Resource Specialist	Soil And Water
Dave Palmer	Geologist	Geology, Energy, And Mineral Resources
Ginger Torres	Environmental Planner	Geology, Lands And Realty
Ryan Rausch	Environmental Planner	Recreation
Jennifer Pyne	Environmental Planner	Recreation, Comprehensive Trails, And Travel Management; Social And Economic Conditions
Edwin "Ben" Lively	Environmental Planner	Comprehensive Trails And Travel Management
Robert Evans	Environmental Planner	Visual Resources
Kavi Koleini	Biologist	Fire Management
A.E. (Gene) Rogge, PhD	Anthropologist	Cultural Resources
Kirsten Erickson	Historian	Cultural Resources
Christina White	Environmental Planner	Social And Economic Conditions
Maggie Fulton	Editor	Editing
Meg Quarrie	Word Processor	Word Processing
Mitch Meek	Graphic Artist	Graphics
CLEAR CREEK ASSOCIATES, URS CORPORATION SUBCONSULTANT		
Barbara Murphy	Geologist	Paleontology
THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMPANY, URS CORPORATION SUBCONSULTANT		
Carol Wirth	Ecologist, Environmental Planner	Social And Economic Conditions